

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 035358

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TO AMEMBASSY LISBON IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 035358

EXDIS

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SECSTATE FROM ATHENS FEB 14

QUOTE S E C R E T ATHENS 1299

EXDIS

DEPT PASS DEF AND OTHER ADDRESSEES AS APPROPRIATE
INCL DEP ASST SECY DEF BERGOLD IN LISBON

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR GR
SUBJECT: US-GREEK NEGOTIATIONS-MILITARY FACILITIES

REF: ATHENS 1232 AND ATHENS 1298

1. THE CONCLUDING SESSION TODAY OF THE INITIAL PHASE OF OUR
TALKS WITH THE GREEK GOVT ABOUT BILATERAL MILITARY
AGREEMENTS AND US FACILITIES IN GREECE DID NOTHING TO
CHANGE OUR BASIC EVALUATION OF GREEK OBJECTIVES (REFTEL).
THE GREEK SIDE REFERRED AGAIN TO OUR FACILITIES AT HELLENIKON
(ATHENAI) AND THE GREEK NEGOTIATOR IF ANYTHING HARDENED
THEIR POSITION WHEN HE SAID THAT, ALTHOUGH THEY HAD NOTED
THE IMPORTANCE WE ATTACHED TO THESE FACILITIES AND OUR
CONTENTION THAT THEY SERVED GREEK DEFENSE NEEDS, NEVER-
THELESS, THE GREEK GOVT WOULD "INSIST" THAT THE US
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 035358

FACILITIES AT HELLENIKON BE ELIMINATED. OTHER POINTS MADE

OR REEMPHASIZED BY THE GREEK SIDE WERE CONSISTENT WITH THEIR PREVIOUSLY OUTLINED POSITION. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THE GREEKS WANT (A) TO REDUCE THE AMERICAN PROFILE, (B) TO UP-DATE, SYNTHESIZE AND TIGHTEN WRITTEN AGREEMENTS AND (C) TO MONITOR AND CONTROL MORE DIRECTLY US MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN GREECE.

2. AT AMB CALOGERAS' LUNCH FOR THE AMERICAN DELEGATION FOLLOWING THE FINAL SESSION, CALOGERAS TOOK STEARNS ASIDE TO PROVIDE WHAT HE TERMED AN "INDISCREET" CLARIFICATION OF GREEK POSITION. NEEDLESS TO SAY, THE CLARIFICATION WAS NOT PARTICULARLY INDISCREET, ALTHOUGH IT DID SUPPLY A HELPFUL BACKGROUND.

3. CALOGERAS SAID THAT HE HAD SEEN CARAMANLIS FOR THE SECOND TIME FEB 13 (HIS FIRST MEETING WITH CARAMANLIS WAS ON SATURDAY, FEB 8) AND HAD BRIEFED THE PM ON THE PROGRESS OF THE DISCUSSIONS. CARAMANLIS HAD INSTRUCTED CALOGERAS TO MAKE CLEAR THAT HE WISHED, ESSENTIALLY FOR POLITICAL REASONS, TO DEMONSTRATE PROGRESS IN REDUCING THE AMERICAN PRESENCE IN GREECE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. AT THE SAME TIME, CARAMANLIS RECOGNIZED THE IMPORTANCE TO GREECE OF EFFECTIVE SIXTH FLEET OPERATIONS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND DID NOT REPEAT NOT WANT TO INTERFERE WITH THESE ANY MORE THAN ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY. STEARNS ASKED WHETHER THE PM HAD IN MIND TANGIBLE PROGRESS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS BEFORE THE SECOND ROUND OF TALKS WERE SCHEDULED TO BEGIN IN MID MARCH. CALOGERAS REPLIED THAT HE WAS NOT CERTAIN BUT THAT SOME INDICATION OF TANGIBLE PROGRESS BEFORE THAT TIME WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY BE WELCOME TO THE PM. STEARNS SAID THAT HE WOULD REPORT THIS TO WASHINGTON BUT THAT THE GREEK GOVT SHOULD REALIZE THAT CURTAILING OR RELOCATING ANY OF OUR ACTIVITIES POSED REAL PRACTICAL PROBLEMS. THIS WAS NOTABLY TRUE OF THE HELLENIKON FACILITY ALTHOUGH AS STEARNS HAD INDICATED IN THE FEB 12 PLENARY MEETING, THERE WERE DIFFICULT PROBLEMS RELATED ALSO TO ELEFSIS AND HOMEPORTING.

4. CALOGERAS SAID THAT THE US FACILITIES AT HELLENIKON
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 035358

WERE A REAL POLITICAL LIABILITY FOR CARAMANLIS. "COULD THEY NOT BE TRANSFERRED TO SOME LESS ACCESSIBLE LOCATION, SUCH AS NEA MAKRI?" HE ASKED. STEARNS REPLIED THAT RELOCATION WOULD COST LARGE AMOUNTS OF MONEY AND IT WAS BY NO MEANS CERTAIN THAT CONGRESS WOULD BE WILLING TO FURNISH THE NECESSARY SUMS.

5. CALOGERAS SAID THAT US FACILITIES AT HELLENIKON WERE

A BURR UNDER THE SADDLE OF THE GREEK MILITARY. GREEK OFFICERS HAD INFORMED HIM THAT WE HAD USED HELLENIKON TO SERVICE AIRCRAFT BEING DELIVERED TO TURKEY. THIS WAS TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE TO THE GREEK GOVT AND THE FACT THAT A RECENT INCIDENT OF THIS KIND HAD OCCURRED INTENSIFIED THE INTEREST OF THE GREEK GOVT IN ELIMINATING US FACILITIES AT HELLENIKON. STEARNS RESPONDED THAT HE WAS AWARE OF ONE INCIDENT IN WHICH F-4'S BEING DELIVERED TO TURKEY WERE REFUELED IN THE GREEK FIR BY A KC-135 WHICH THEN LANDED AT HELLENIKON WITH PASSENGERS BUT THAT AS SOON AS THIS HAD BEEN BROUGHT TO OUR ATTENTION WE HAD TAKEN STEPS TO PREVENT ITS RECURRENCE. (WE ARE SENDING A SEPARATE MESSAGE ON THIS SUBJECT.)

6. STEARNS REPEATED THAT HELLENIKON SHELTERED A VARIETY OF IMPORTANT SERVICES MOST OF WHICH PROVIDED DIRECT OR INDIRECT BENEFITS TO THE GREEK DEFENSE EFFORT. WHILE RELOCATION WOULD BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT, INTEGRATION OF US FACILITIES INTO THE ADJACENT HELLENIKON AIR BASE SHOULD BE POSSIBLE AND WOULD DO MUCH TO REDUCE THE GREEK GOVT'S POLITICAL PROBLEM. HE ASKED CALOGERAS TO LOOK CAREFULLY AT THIS LINE OF APPROACH TO SEE WHETHER SOME COMPROMISE COULD BE REACHED WHICH WOULD PRESERVE THE VALUABLE FACILITIES HELLENIKON.

7. CALOGERAS SAID US NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE SPANISH INTERESTED THE GREEK GOVT AND MIGHT PROVIDE A MODEL FOR NEW BILATERAL AGREEMENTS BETWEEN GREECE AND THE US. HE ASKED WHETHER WE COULD SUPPLY THE TEXTS OF US-SPANISH BASE AGREEMENTS AND ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE OPERATION OF OUR BASES IN SPAIN WHICH WOULD BE RELEVANT TO GREEK-US NEGOTIATIONS. STEARNS SAID
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 035358

THAT WE COULD PROBABLY NOT REPEAT NOT SUPPLY THE GREEKS WITH THE ACTUAL TEXTS OF OUR AGREEMENTS WITH THE SPANISH, SINCE SOME OF THESE MIGHT WELL BE CLASSIFIED, BUT THAT WE COULD FURNISH INFORMATION ON OPERATING RELATIONSHIPS NOT ONLY WITH SPAIN BUT ELSEWHERE. HE OBSERVED THAT SPAIN COULD NOT IN ANY CASE BE AN EXACT MODEL FOR THE GREEKS SINCE SPAIN WAS NOT A MEMBER OF NATO. CALOGERAS ACCEPTED THE DISTINCTION BUT SAID THAT THE GREEK SIDE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN ARRANGEMENTS REACHED IN OTHER COUNTRIES INCLUDING SPAIN FOR THE OPERATION OF US MILITARY FACILITIES.

8. CALOGERAS AND STEARNS AGREED THAT THEY WOULD REMAIN IN INFORMAL CONTACT WHILE THE FORMAL TALKS WERE RECESSED SO THAT BOTH WASHINGTON AND ATHENS COULD KEEP ABREAST OF

DEVELOPMENTS AS THE TWO GOVERNMENTS FORMULATED THEIR
CONSIDERED REACTIONS TO THE FIRST ROUND OF TALKS.

KUBISCH

UNQUOTE INGERSOLL

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